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**Testimony Regarding S.B. 1135: An Act Establishing a Sustainable Path for Maintaining
the Budget Reserve Fund and Reducing the Effect of Revenue Volatility on the State
Budget**

Cheryl Burack, Executive Director, Family Centered Services of CT, Inc.

Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee

April 23, 2015

Senator Fonfara, Representative Berger, and distinguished members of the Committee:

My name is Cheryl Burack and I am the Executive Director of Family Centered Services of CT. We work with 1600 families/year to help them become safe and nurturing places, where children can succeed. We also serve 200 middle and high school students in a program designed to prevent teen pregnancy and give students a sense of purpose and caring for their community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB1135. I would also like to speak in favor of higher revenue in the upcoming fiscal year to avoid devastating cuts to Connecticut's social safety net.

The cuts are deep. The Governor's budget cuts nearly \$600 million from programs critical to families across the state, including \$49.3 million from the HUSKY health insurance program for children, families, and pregnant women and \$11.3 million from the Office of Early Childhood. The DSS-funded Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative is totally eliminated, even though it was endorsed by the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee of the CT General Assembly in 2012. This Committee concluded that DSS has established a "solid methodology for TPPI funding that should continue to be applied", and that state contract requirements and outcome measures were met or

exceeded consistently. The Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program is in some of the State's highest risk communities, but our teen pregnancy rate is a little over 1%, compared to the statewide average of 5.5%. This raises the question of do we pay now or pay later? If the proposed cuts are made, I worry about the future of our state and its citizens.

In order to avoid the harmful effect of these cuts, we ask the committee to raise revenue. We support the revenue ideas of groups like Connecticut Voices for Children, including a more progressive income tax, the elimination of certain tax breaks, and raising the cigarette tax.

I have attached a Fact Sheet. I know this is a difficult time and appreciate your thoughtful consideration.

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Restore \$1.9 million to

CT Department of Social Services Statewide Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative

Recent Outcomes for Statewide Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative (TPPI)

School Year	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Number of Teens Receiving Services	888	884	790
Percentage of Participating Teens Getting Pregnant	1.01%	0.68%	Outcomes available at end of year
Percentage of Participating Senior Teens Graduating High School (in the program that serves 12 th graders)	100%	100%	Outcomes available at end of year

- Teens participating in the DSS Statewide Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative reside in communities with highest percentages of births to teen mothers including **Bridgeport, Hartford, Windham, New Britain, Waterbury, Meriden, New Haven, Killingly, New London, Norwich, West Haven, East Hartford and Torrington** and are at **high risk for becoming teen parents**.
- Percentage of births to teens in **high risk communities is often twice or three times the statewide average of 5.5%** (2011 Registration Report, Connecticut Dept. of Health Services.)
- Even though teens participating in the Statewide Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative are at high risk for becoming teen parents, the percentage who become pregnant while they are participating in the TPPI (.68% to 1.01%) is **substantially less than the overall statewide average (5.5%) and remarkably less the five year statewide average for Hartford (16.7% from 2007 through 2011.)**
- The DSS-funded Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative serves almost 800 students statewide at an average cost of \$2430/student and leads the way in using only evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention models.
- DSS Statewide Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative was endorsed by the **Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee of the CT General Assembly** in 2012. See their 2012 report entitled Adolescent Health in Connecticut: RBA Project 2011.
- Data above was collected and analyzed by independent nationally renowned evaluators, Philliber Research Associates and the Family Planning Program, OB/GYN, School of Medicine, UConn Health.

